

ACHR e-news

News from groups around Asia about what's happening in the region . . .

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WHO'S DOING WHAT for WORLD HABITAT DAY in ASIA?

Back in 1985, the United Nations declared the first Monday in October every year as World Habitat Day, to "reflect on the state of human settlements and the basic right to adequate shelter for all and to remind the world of its collective responsibility for the future of the human habitat." Many groups here in Asia find it strategic to use this annual occasion to showcase certain projects or concepts or processes and have used the UN spotlight to play a little politics around the work they are doing on issues of housing and land tenure. Others pay no attention at all. Here are a few notes about what some of the region's committed groups working on issues of habitat for the urban poor are doing for this year's World Habitat Day :

NEPAL: Lajana writes that in Nepal, this year's World Habitat Day falls in the middle of the big Hindu *Dashain* festival, when the whole country takes a week off and goes home. So the government decided to postpone the celebrations until October 13, when all the offices will reopen. Another UN day - *World Cities Day* - will be celebrated at the end of October, so with these two flags fore and aft, the whole second half of the month will be celebrated as *Urban October*, with many different activities - all being jointly organized by Lumanti, the community federations, and the national and local governments. Here's a peek at what they're planning:

1. **Rental housing project inauguration:** Lumanti's pioneering affordable rental housing project in Pokhara will be inaugurated by the Minister for Urban Development in mid-October.
2. **National workshop:** A national workshop on "*Voices from slums*" (which is this year's official World Habitat Day theme) will be jointly organized by Lumanti and the community federations in Kathmandu, with the participation of community leaders from different parts of the country. This workshop will happen on October 13th, just before the main event, so that the outcomes of the workshop can be presented in the main World Habitat Day event. Representatives from various government agencies will be interviewed by print and broadcast media representatives on their policies, plans and programs for upgrading slums in Nepal's cities. And as part of the event, the Community Women's Forum, which links all the women's savings cooperatives in the Kathmandu Valley, will invite media representatives on a tour through some informal settlements in the city, with opportunities to talk with the community people who live there and learn about their various self-development initiatives.
3. **City level events:** Besides these national-level activities in Kathmandu, celebrations, ribbon-cuttings, public forums and project inaugurations will be organized to mark World Habitat Day in several other cities around the country.



THAILAND: In Thailand, CODI and the national and city networks of urban poor communities are continuing their tradition of making maximum political and strategic use of World Habitat Day (and the whole month surrounding the actual day) to bring the official spotlight onto what the country's resourceful poor communities are doing to solve their problems of land and housing. The mood is a little subdued this year, though, what with a ban on political gatherings that has been imposed by the military junta which now controls the country. But within these constraints, events are still being planned during October in three or four cities which will link the urban citywide slum upgrading work (with support from CODI's Baan Mankong Program) with the rural district-based land reform-by-people (which is supported by another national CODI program), and will showcase several provinces where these urban and rural housing and land reform processes are being combined. The World Habitat Month's events will culminate in a national meeting and workshop in Bangkok on October 31st, which coincides with *World Cities Day*. For this big event, the community networks and CODI have invited the Prime Minister and are negotiating to involve UN-ESCAP, which will be organizing its own half-day panel discussion on October 7th, on "Voices from slums", to discuss issues of slum upgrading and inclusive urbanization. Three community leaders have been invited to join senior representatives from CODI, the Bangkok Metropolitan Authority and the Human Rights Commission on the panel at UN-ESCAP.



PHILIPPINES: Ruby writes that the Homeless People's Federation Philippines (HPFP) will mark World Habitat Day with a three-day workshop on barangay-wide mapping and planning, in which the communities in one barangay (urban district) will present the results of their extensive slum community mapping to the local barangay captain and barangay council, and begin the process of upgrading planning. The workshop will take place in Barangay Mapulang Lupa, in the city of Valenzuela (one of the 17 cities that make up Metro Manila), and will be a chance to translate this year's theme "Voices from slums" into practical action on the ground, in which the Valponet citywide community network (which includes HPFP and

several other community federations) negotiates with their local government to upgrade and secure the tenure for all the slums in that barangay, through a barangay-wide plan involving a variety of planning strategies: some on-site upgrading and readjustment, some CMP land purchases and some relocation to government land within the same barangay. Local government officials from other barangays in Valenzuela and other Metro Manila cities will be invited to join the workshop - especially those where barangay-wide mapping has also begun - to see how the people-driven and citywide mapping can catalyze a collaborative process to solve the serious housing problems at scale, and so the process can spread to other areas. Nad, Tee and Yuli, from the Community Architects Network (CAN), and Minh Chau from the ACHR secretariat, will also join the workshop.

CAMBODIA: Somsak writes that this year, the National Community Savings Network and its NGO partner, the Community Development Fund Foundation (CDF) have decided to organize their national celebration of World Habitat Day in Banteay Meanchey Province, in the northern part of Cambodia - a province which continues to be rich in innovative housing and upgrading projects and rich in good collaboration between the poor communities and their municipal and provincial authorities to solve serious problems of land, housing and access to basic services, even with very limited funds. Community committees from other northern region provinces - Battambang and Siem Reap - will join the event, which will take place in the Serey Sophoan Municipal hall, and will also be supported by the UN-Habitat's Cambodia program.



WOMEN'S CO-OP CELEBRATES THE QUARTER CENTURY MARK

The annual anniversaries of the Women's Bank (now called Women's Co-op) are always big events, but this year's celebration in August, which marked the Women's Co-op's 25th year, was the biggest yet. They had to rent a sports stadium to fit in all the 45,000 members who joined the main event on August 29th, and even then, conditions were crowded! That means that well over half the 81,000 Women's Co-op members traveled to Colombo to join the party, dressed up in their most colorful sarees, with flowers in their hair, all of them bringing their own food and paying to charter their own buses from their villages, towns and provincial cities across Sri Lanka. Among the distinguished guests were two cabinet ministers: the Minister of Trade and Cooperatives and the Minister of Science and Technology, who is a respected architect and an old friend of Women's Co-op.



What began with a few interested women in a few informal settlements in Colombo in 1989 has now grown into a country-wide movement of poor women's savings and credit collectives which tackle various aspects of poverty using their own togetherness and their own resources. When it comes to community savings, it's hard to top the statistics from this national movement: 81,000 savings members in 7,000 small savings groups, in 24 out of the country's 25 districts, with combined savings of US\$ 19.23 million - most of which is in constant circulation in small loans to savings group members for emergencies, livelihood, education, health and housing improvements. It's very big money and a very large movement now, but the essential building block of the Women's Co-op has all along remained the small savings group of 5-15 members, who meet together and save every week, managing their own money and making all the decisions about how it is loaned out and repaid.



Besides doing their savings and credit, each member is also in charge of one particular issue within her community: health, culture, housing, agriculture, children, insurance, accounting or entrepreneurship, etc. As Nandasiri Gamage, who founded Women's Bank, explains, "This is how we make sure that everyone is active and everyone is a leader." All these issue-based leaders are then linked together in larger issue-based networks at city and national levels, which carry out all sorts of programs and activities to assist members and tackle poverty on these different fronts. Each network is represented by a different colored saree (white for education, orange for housing, light blue for health, green for agriculture, purple for entrepreneurship). And when all those thousands of women converged on the stadium in Colombo for the anniversary event, they arranged themselves by these issue networks, so the sarees made a rainbow of brightly colored rows around the stadium.

A group of ACHR friends from community networks in eight other countries traveled to Sri Lanka to join the big celebrations and to spend a few days learning more about the nuts and bolts of this community-led savings movement, which is one of the Asia's earliest. With coordinating help from Sevanatha, the Women's Co-op's NGO partner, field visits were organized to several cities in Sri Lanka, where the visiting teams had a chance to sit with some small savings groups and branches and see how they conduct their meetings, keep their accounts, make their loan decisions and manage various aspects of their self-help movement. One of the teams visited the southern coastal city of Galle, where Women's Co-op used a grant from ACHR to start savings groups and set up a special revolving loan fund to help women to repair their houses and restore their livelihoods after the devastating 2004 Asian tsunami. What began with just 2 savings groups in one coastal community has now grown to 15, with collective savings of 10.3 million Rupees (US\$ 80,000). The visitors also had a chance to visit some housing projects that Women's Co-op members are implementing with loans from CLAF-Net, the national revolving loan fund that has been set up with ACCA funds and is being jointly managed by Women's Co-op and Sevanatha.

UPCA MEETING: The Urban Poor Coalition Asia (UPCA) decided to take advantage of so many urban poor groups being together to organize a parallel UPCA forum on August 30th. All the groups gave presentations about the work they are doing in their countries and Ruby Papeleras, from the Philippines Homeless People's Federation, led a discussion about future UPCA activities and the UPCA fund. There is still a lot of excitement about setting up a regional UPCA fund, but since the logistics of sending money back and forth between countries is still quite complicated, they decided that initially, the money that community networks are gathering for the UPCA fund will be used to establish national funds, and that money will be used for exchanges and special UPCA initiatives within the country. Women's Co-op offered to organize 2-week training courses on community savings for interested community groups from other countries, and agreed to pay all internal expenses and housing and food for the visitors, if ACHR could pay for the airfare. Inspired by this idea, the Thai team offered their colleagues in other countries a similar training course on community mapping in Thailand. For more information on UPCA, please contact Ruby at: rhaddad67@yahoo.com

COMMUNITY WELFARE FUNDS GET A BOOST IN NEPAL

In the second phase of the ACCA Program, an attempt has been made to help community groups experiment with setting up their own community-based welfare systems, of the sort that the community networks in Thailand, Cambodia and Philippines have been running for years, as part of their community savings and fund systems. Some groups have taken up the idea and used the \$2,000 per city grant from ACCA to set up and test new systems for taking care of their poor, sick, elderly and needy community members, in different ways. The national network of community women's savings groups in Nepal has decided to spread the opportunity as widely as possible by using the ACCA funds to give smaller grants to more savings cooperatives, to help them launch welfare funds which they run as part of their cooperative operations. Here is an update on this interesting welfare fund experiment from Lumanti Joshi, a community architect with the Kathmandu-based NGO Lumanti:

Very few of Nepal's urban poor are able to access either of the government's two principal welfare programs - old age pensions or support for single women - even though they may technically qualify for benefits. Without this formal welfare support, the poor have developed their own informal support systems to help each other when needs arise. Some of the saving groups and women's savings cooperatives have established their own welfare funds, using a certain portion of their daily savings or funds collected especially for welfare (usually \$1 - 2 per member per year). These pioneering groups set their own rules for how they manage their welfare funds. In the city of Dharan, for example, the women's savings cooperative has mobilized 70,000 Rupees (\$700) for their welfare fund and are already using it to provide benefits to members in need, according to the following flexible rules:



- **Rule 1:** The cooperative will collect Rs 200 (\$2) from each member per year, at the beginning of the year, for the welfare fund.
- **Rule 2:** The cooperative will also allocate 10% of its loan interest earnings for the welfare fund.
- **Rule 3:** If a member dies or is disabled by an accident, she (or her surviving family) will be given Rs 2,000 (\$20).
- **Rule 4:** If a member's immediate family member dies, she will be given Rs. 1,000 (\$10).
- **Rule 5:** If a member has to undergo a major operation, she will be given Rs. 2,000 (\$20).
- **Rule 6:** If a member becomes terminally ill, she will be provided Rs. 3,000 to 5,000 (\$30-50), depending on the situation.
- **Rule 7:** If a member has a baby, she will be given Rs 2,000 (\$20) and Rs. 500 (\$5) to start the new child's saving.

The rules and benefits provided by the welfare funds vary from one cooperative to another, depending on their priorities and how much funds they have available. But everyone agrees these welfare funds - even though they have started on a small scale - have helped a lot to ease the situation of community members when they find themselves in difficult times.



In August, savings leaders from 17 cooperatives and 3 saving groups in 9 cities gathered in Kathmandu for a meeting in which the first batch of ACCA support for these growing welfare funds was handed over to the women's savings cooperatives in Kathmandu and several other cities. Before the meeting, representatives from the Community Women's Forum (a network of all the women-led savings cooperatives in the Kathmandu Valley) visited each of these towns and helped the savings group members to prepare their policies and practices for managing their new welfare funds.

The meeting provided an opportunity for community members to share their experiences on managing community welfare programs and to learn from their friends in other groups. Representatives from the Federation of Cooperatives were also invited, and they really appreciated the work these urban poor

women are doing to develop their communities through their saving groups. Each of 20 women's savings cooperatives around the country were given Rs 80,000 (\$800), from a \$16,000 grant from ACCA, as seed money to start new welfare funds or strengthen funds that are already in operation.

For more information about the welfare funds in Nepal, please contact Lumanti at: lumantijoshi@gmail.com

ODE TO THE STRENGTHENING POWER OF A CUP OF GOOD COFFEE

Hosaka writes that Japan is getting older and poorer, including the 3 million people who still live in the country's 840 *burakus* ("outcaste settlements"). Many inner-city *burakus* that were upgraded and revitalized in 70s and 80s are, for various reasons, becoming dilapidated and deserted. In 2002, national government subsidies that were fought very hard for by the Buraku Liberation movement, to make up for centuries of discrimination, were stopped. And in 2007, changes in the rent control laws have driven up public housing rents and driven out young people, with the result that many *burakus* (including Asaka) have become half-empty settlements of mostly elderly, mostly poor and mostly living alone. At the same time, Osaka's mayor has made matters worse by pursuing a policy of taking back and selling off to private commercial interests the public land, housing and amenities (like schools, community centers, playgrounds and public bathhouses) in *burakus*, seriously eroding the quality of life and community management. So the residents in these *burakus*, which are slowly turning back into slums, are realizing they can no longer depend on government assistance and need to develop their own systems of mutual support within their communities.

Faced with this impoverishing of their communities, several *burakus* in Osaka (including Asaka, Yata and Kashima) have jointly formed a research group and undertaken self-surveys and analysis, with help from friends in ACHR-Japan, and Osaka City University, and decided to establish a "people-based town development agency" to help the residents in these *burakus* to regain their self-management capacities and revive their once-strong communities through a variety of activities. So far, they've raised funds (\$100,000 raised locally to match a \$20,000 grant from ACCA) and organized a series of planning workshops and exchanges with friends in Korea.



Enter Cafe Cosmos: But perhaps the most immediately transforming project the new town development agency has undertaken is the opening of a little cafe in Asaka. The community negotiated with the city to use one of the vacant rental housing units, and in August 2013, they converted this little apartment into a cafe, where the community's young and old people can gather, enjoy coffee and traditional Japanese food, organize house maintenance consultations and generally mingle. They called their new community gathering place Cafe Cosmos. Because so many of the community facilities and gathering places in these *burakus* have been closed down by the city (like public baths, small shops, community centers), the lack of venues for people to gather meant that people were no longer gathering and were becoming increasingly isolated. So it's no surprise that the Cafe Cosmos has been a hit, and is almost constantly packed, with 20 - 30 customers at a time, filling all the tables. The cafe is open every day

from ten to five o'clock, and is run by two community women volunteers, Akiko and Etsuko, who prepare and sell inexpensive plates of *okonomiyaki* (Japanese pancakes), and *ramen* noodles and vegetables, as well as a popular breakfast set (toast, coffee and a boiled egg, for 250 yen). Four months after the cafe opened, the smiling Akiko said, "Older people here used to isolate themselves, but gradually, they are becoming regular customers here at the cafe."

Hosaka writes that Yamamoto-san and other *buraku* leaders in Osaka plan to occupy other vacant units, expand the functions of Cafe Cosmos and add a "life-support consultation" center, where elderly community members who live alone can be assisted and linked to various social welfare programs and support services. There are also discussions about starting community-oriented businesses and other community-managed welfare programs, as part of their program to revitalize their *burakus*. By showing a new model of community management in these three *burakus*, Yamamoto-san hopes the project will expand to involve a large number of other low-income settlements in Osaka facing similar problems and coping with these same adverse policy trends. For more information, please contact Hosaka at: hosaka.m@k6.dion.ne.jp

(The photos of Cafe Cosmos are courtesy of the Buraku Liberation League News)

PEOPLE-DRIVEN UPGRADING POLICY NEWS from MONGOLIA



Almost 60% of the population in Mongolia's capitol city Ulaanbaatar live in the squalid, unplanned, polluted and unserved ger areas that sprawl like a vast carpet across the hills and empty land around the city. In smaller towns and villages, the figure climbs to 80-90% of the population. But even though a hefty majority of Mongolians now live in these informal settlements, neither the national government nor the various local government agencies have paid much attention to the problems in ger areas in their constituencies or taken any measures to address them.

But the people who live in these ger areas have not been so complacent. Over the past five years, ger area community members in towns, cities and urban districts all over Mongolia have organized themselves into savings groups, rolled up their sleeves and shown that they are ready to improve their economic situation, their living environment and their housing and can do it themselves very efficiently and readily, with just a little support. Through hundreds of small projects to pave roads, paint fences, build parks and community centers, lay drainage lines and water supply, construct bridges, manufacture biomass fuel bricks and improve housing, these community groups are showing a simple, direct and people-driven way to upgrade Mongolia's informal ger areas. With support from two key NGOs - the Urban Development Resource Center (UDRC) and Center on Housing Rights and Development (CHRD) - and with funding support from the ACCA program, this people-driven ger area upgrading has now begun catching the notice of the government.

Enhe Tsendorj, from UDRC, writes that in Ulaanbaatar, the mayor has now created the city's first program which focuses on improving the infrastructure and housing in ger areas, inspired by the people-driven model that has been amply demonstrated in his city. To support and strengthen the people-driven ger area upgrading process that has already begun, the city has set up two new institutions: the Ger Area Development Agency and the Ger Area Housing Project. The program will support five activities:

- Develop housing through re-planning of ger areas.
- Re-plan urban lands with citizens' involvement, improve land utilization, increase value of land, develop ger areas into private housing areas, and improve people's living conditions in those areas.
- Provide housing for the target group by promoting the development of alternative rental housing.
- Promote housing through creation of new residential areas.
- Improve the condition of old apartment buildings through retrofitting.

Under the new program, the city government will provide assistance to ger area communities to survey their settlements, identify problems and develop their own area redevelopment plans (to include road paving, drainage, water supply and municipal heating pipes), which will then be submitted to the Ger Area Development Agency for approval. The city government will then hire private-sector contractors to do the main redevelopment work, according to the community plans, with funding from the state and city budgets and as much involvement of the communities as possible. In the first round of the new program, 12 ger areas were selected for redevelopment in 2013, and another 8 ger areas are underway in 2014.



For more information, please contact Enhe at: enhe21@yahoo.com

ANNOUNCING the PERWEEN RAHMAN FELLOWSHIP WINNERS

Earlier this year, the Community Architects Network (CAN) announced a call for applications for a new fellowship that was being set up to commemorate the work and spirit of the Pakistani architect, activist and community-mapper-cum-laude Perween Rahman, who was killed in Karachi on March 13, 2013. The fellowship would provide an extremely modest grant of \$2,000 to at least 15 community architects or community-based builders to work with urban poor communities and their local support organizations on specific projects, within the ACHR network, for about six months. Some 32 fellowship applications were subsequently received, which were then carefully screened and discussed by the regional CAN team. In June, Tee (one of CAN's regional coordinators) announced the 15 fellows chosen for 2014. As Tee put it, "We hope that through their fresh enthusiasm, hard work and growing knowledge, this group of 15 fellows will become part of CAN and ACHR, and will help to roll this development work forward creative ways." Here is a brief on the 15 fellows: who they are, where they will work and what they will do:



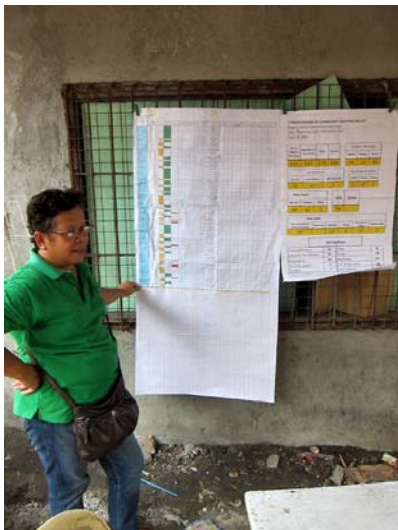
1. **VIETNAM:** Mr. Le Nhu Nga, a young community architect who works with ACVN, will work with poor communities in the town of Bac Kan to improve their housing and also help build and strengthen their team of community-based builders.
2. **THAILAND:** The Openspace community architects will work with the historic Nanglerng community in Bangkok to develop plans for adjusting their community to accommodate a new subway train station that is to be built in a corner of the settlement.
3. **PHILIPPINES:** Ms. Villa Mae Libutaque ("Val"), an architect with TAMPEI, will work with the ULHOA community in Valenzuela to develop re-blocking plans and housing designs, in collaboration with the Homeless People's Federation, SHFC and FDUP.
4. **PHILIPPINES:** Ms. Emelyn Bermundo ("Emmy"), another TAMPEI architect, will work with the Del Rosario community to develop alternative stilt-house plans for the permanently-flooded community they now own, with HPFP and FDUP.
5. **PAKISTAN:** Mr. Siraj Uddin, a community-based technician from TTRC, will work with the poor in Karachi's Baldia Town to train community youths to do mapping and surveying for infrastructure services, in collaboration with OPP and URC.
6. **PAKISTAN:** Mr. Muhammad Fiza, from HAMET, will work with informal communities and local governments in Bahawalpur District to help plan, engineer, cost-estimate and develop water supply and lane sewers, in collaboration with OPP.
7. **NEPAL:** Mr. Parvesh Khanal and Mr. Tulsu Kumar Kaway, from the PTAG group of Community Architects, will work with the Salghari community in Ratnanagar to prepare housing and settlement upgrading plans and train local builders.
8. **MONGOLIA:** Mr. Batdorj, from the Young Architects Group, will work with informal ger-area communities in Ulaanbaatar's Sukhbaatar District to create open spaces and green areas, in collaboration with the NGO UDRC.
9. **INDONESIA:** Ms. Ivana Lee, an architect from Ciliwung Merdeka, will work with four informal communities along Jakarta's Ciliwung River to map their settlements and develop alternative *in-situ* housing solutions to use to negotiate with government.
10. **INDONESIA:** Ms. Liza Marzaman, a young architect, will work with the Kampung Buloa fishing community in Makassar to map their settlement and develop long term upgrading plans, in collaboration with the local university and ARKOM.
11. **INDIA:** Mr. Stanzin Tundup, from the Leh Old Town Initiative (LOTI), will support a community-based project to restore an old shrine and temple in Leh, with communities providing all the material and labor, in collaboration with Tibet Heritage Fund.
12. **INDIA:** Ms. Nicola Antaki will work with poor children in an alternative school, which is located in a Mumbai slum, to experiment with planning and carrying out their own physical and quality-of-life improvements, using the school as their laboratory.
13. **CAMBODIA:** Ms. Kao Danak, a community architect with the CDF Foundation, will assist communities in Kandal, Preah Sihanouk and Posenchey District to map their settlements and develop upgrading plans, to be partly funded by ACCA.
14. **FIJI:** Mr. Hanisetoka Manueli, a community architect, will work with informal communities in the town of Nasinu to map their settlements and develop reblocking plans, in collaboration with the People's Community Network (PCN).
15. **BANGLADESH:** Ms. Fatema Sharmin Sonia, an architect, will work with the people in Shondip Colony, in Chittagong, to map their settlement, develop housing improvement plans and construct some pilot house designs, in collaboration with UPPR.

For more information about CAN or the Perween Rahman Fellowship, contact Tee at: architect_once@hotmail.com



BARANGAY-WIDE MAPPING and PLANNING in the PHILIPPINES

An important initiative to promote and institutionalize a more citywide, more community-driven and more localized approach to solving serious urban poor housing problems is happening in the Philippines. The government's Social Housing Finance Corporation (SHFC), with assistance from the World Bank, the Homeless People's Federation, the NGO FDUP and ACHR, has been working to broaden its program of housing finance mechanisms for the poor, so they work better, faster, more locally and in more comprehensive, citywide ways. Since it was set up in 1988, the Community Mortgage Program (CMP), the SHFC's chief housing finance program for the poor, has loaned \$250 million to 2,190 organized communities to buy the land they already occupied or found elsewhere, providing secure land for 249,622 poor families. But for years, complaints about the CMP have been rumbling away: too much paperwork, too much time-lag between applying for and actually getting the loans (3 - 10 years!), not enough loan for site development and housing (so CMP communities tend to remain slum-like), too centralized and too geared to individual projects rather than citywide change. Part of the CMP reform process involves letting city or district ("barangay") governments take bulk CMP loans to finance packages of projects they develop locally, in partnership with community organizations and NGOs within their constituencies. This "localized CMP" (LCMP) is now being piloted in several cities and barangays, which are proving to be training laboratories for everyone involved.



One of the cities where "Localized CMP" is being piloted is Valenzuela, a smallish industrial city in Metro Manila with a population of 600,000 people, of whom more than half live in informal settlements scattered throughout the city. The city has had two progressive mayors (brothers) who have partnered with the Valponet community network, the Homeless People's Federation and the NGO FDUP to expand savings, develop on-site housing upgrading projects and support a people-driven barangay-wide mapping and planning process in Valenzuela. The regional Community Architects Network (CAN) workshop that was held in June 2013, in which the architects helped several Valenzuela communities to map their settlements and develop upgrading plans, gave a big push to the citywide process, and helped turn new concepts into actual projects, with support from SHFC / WB. After the CAN workshop, five communities are doing upgrading planning to demonstrate community-driven upgrading options in the city, with support from the community architects of TAMPEII.

Earlier this month, the joint team in Valenzuela collaborated with CAN to organize a national workshop on barangay-wide mapping and planning by people (October 2-4), in which the active process in Barangay Mapulang Lupa was used as an example to teach and inspire community networks and local officials in other cities and barangays to do the same. Most of the 70 people who joined the workshop were community leaders and barangay officials from Barangay Mauplang Lupa and other barangays in Valenzuela, but there were also teams of community leaders and local government officials from four other cities: Talisay, Davao, Muntinlupa and Marikina (all four are LCMP pilot cities also). Nad and Tee (CAN's regional coordinators), a team of architects and community leaders from Yogyakarta and Minh Chau (from the ACHR secretariat) also joined.

On the first day, the Valponet leaders presented the results of their intense, six-month process of community mapping, settlement profiling and savings mobilizing in 16 squatter settlements in the barangay, and put up all their figures on the walls. After some field visits, the group understood that in Barangay Mapulang Lupa, these 16 settlements can be roughly divided into three common tenure situations, with some overlap: communities living on public land under electricity transmission lines, on private land and along (and in) waterways. In the old kind of planning, each settlement would be planned and dealt with individually, as a stand-alone project, or at best, a group of settlements under the same tenure situation might be planned and redeveloped together. But if all the settlements in the barangay are to be upgraded, the planning and solution needs to include all of them, and this was one of the key lessons of the workshop. At the end of the workshop, a concrete 6-step development plan for the barangay was worked out, and will be presented to the barangay council in early November.



For more information on the process in Valenzuela, please contact Ruby at: rhaddad67@yahoo.com

ACHR SAYS GOODBYE TO THREE FRIENDS

In a network as large and as old as ACHR's, it's to be expected that we would lose some friends along the way. Twenty-five years, after all, is enough time for young activists to become middle-aged, for middle-aged activists to grow old, and for old activists to become extinct. But somehow, the past few months have brought an unusual concentration of extinctions, and we have three good friends and teachers to mourn.

CELIA TUASON (October 14, 1960 - October 9, 2014)

We just got word that Ceila Tuason, one of the national leaders in the Philippines Homeless People's Federation, has died on October 9th, after struggling against cancer for some time. In the Philippines federation, most of the national and local leaders are women, and they have an affectionate tradition of referring to these leaders collectively as "the mothers." Most of them are, in fact, mothers, and, like Celia, have numbers of children to look after. But the "mothers" appellation also honors the kind of mother-like strength, gentleness, intuition, warmth and capability these women bring to the difficult work they do with their communities and with the larger federation, in their struggle against poverty. For many ACHR members, Celia has for some 16 years been one of the smiling faces who welcome guests who visit Payatas and Tandang Sora Avenue, and has been a graceful, patient, articulate and soft-spoken presenter of stories about the federation's savings program, housing projects and other federation initiatives. Over the years, Celia has represented the Philippines federation on many ACHR exposure visits and meetings, as well, over the years. Most recently, she traveled twice to Bangkok, in February and March 2014, as part of the Philippines team who took part in the ACHR-IIED poverty line study, even though her strength was visibly diminished.

(Ruby writes about Celia) Celia was born on October 14, 1960 in the province of Isabela, north of Manila. Celia was a dedicated wife to her husband, Roland, who is a carpenter, and mother to two children: a son Kristopher Ronn, 26, who is a nursing graduate, and a daughter Carmela, 17, who is now in her first year of architecture school. Between 1990 and 2000, Celia and her family lived in one of the informal settlements that was dangerously close to the mountain-like garbage dump in Barangay Payatas. After the garbage-dump tragedy in July 2000, she and her family were able to join the Golden Shower housing project nearby, which was one of the Homeless People's Federation's first on-site housing redevelopment projects, in which 520 very poor families (many of them working as garbage-pickers on the dump) negotiated to buy the land they had been squatting on for 20 years and fully redevelop their housing and infrastructure.



Celia started her work with communities in 1993, in Payatas, with Father Norberto and the Vincentian Missionaries Social Development Foundation (VMSDFI). She worked as a volunteer on a VMSDFI micro-credit program that was modeled on the Grameen Bank system. After some time, they found that the program would require a lot more staff and budget, if it wanted to expand. So instead they decided to modify the program so that extra staff and budget wouldn't be needed. About that time, a learning exchange visit to Mumbai, India gave the program staff an alternative idea about saving - not through staff-run micro-credit schemes but through savings groups that the community people managed themselves. That was when the community savings process started in Payatas. In 1995, Celia became one of the first leaders to head an Area Resource Center (ARC) or savings group satellite, which the communities within the Homeless People's Federation continue to manage to this day. The creation of savings groups began to spread to other regions in 1997, and Celia was among the lead promoters of the program, providing orientations and hands-on training to poor communities in other cities on how to start savings and keep their records properly. For over 16 years, Celia's main task with the HPFPI was focused on savings:

implementation, monitoring, capacity-building of ARC community personnel on simple bookkeeping and record-keeping. She was also in charge of managing the funds from ACCA.

Photos: The top photo shows Celia working with Jockin on the model house that was built in Payatas for the launch of the federation's Security of Tenure campaign in November, 2000. The middle photo shows Celia happily receiving contributions for the Urban Poor Coalition Asia (UPCA) fund, at the UPCA launch in Quezon City in March, 2012. The last shows Celia and Deanna on a field visit to the Homeless Network's first housing project in Bangkok, during the Poverty Line Study meeting in March 2014.





We have also gotten word from friends in Korea of the death of Father John Daly, who helped transform the housing rights movement in South Korea from protesting evictions to developing solutions to evictions, in the form of the country's first community-planned and built housing projects. The ideas Father Daly helped pioneer, in three important projects in the late 1970s and early 80s (Bogum Jahri in 1976, Han-Dok in 1979 and Mok-Dong in 1985), were like lightning rods for squatters, renters and evictees in a city whose affordable housing options were dwindling day by day. Hundreds came to Bogum Jahri, which became a living classroom for people to visit and learn how much poor people can do themselves - with only a very little money and the power of their cooperation and their collective spirit. But this brief flowering of new possibilities was soon swept over by even larger and more brutal waves of eviction in the late 80s, which inspired the formation of ACHR (in which Father Daly was key), as a means of bringing experience from the rest of Asia to assist the Koreans in their struggle. Here are some remembrances from some of Father Daly's friends in the ACHR network:

(Fr. Mun-su Park in Seoul) In 1971 when Fr. Daly was novice master of Korean Jesuits, he took training in community organization, and sent all his novices to live for a time in public housing or squatter settlements. On the first day Fr. Daly went to live in the squatter village along Chongkye Stream, he met Je Jung Gu, and the two of them experienced such a deep sense of shared thought and feeling that they spent the entire night talking. This was the beginning of a friendship that came to have a significant effect on the history of Korea. When Park Chung Hee issued emergency decrees to solidify his dictatorship, all the activists in the Chongkye Stream squatter settlement were arrested and the people's movement, lacking leadership, scattered. Fr. Daly and Je Jung Gu realized that the Alinsky method of confrontation had prevented the formation of leadership among the squatters themselves, so they began anew in the squatter settlement in Yangpyong-dong, Seoul, by living quietly with the residents as neighbors. They prepared one room for Je Jung Gu and his wife, Shin Myong Ja, one room for Fr. Daly, and one room to be used as a small gathering place for residents. Many residents would drop in there frequently for a cup of tea and conversation.

In 1976 the Yangpyong squatter settlement was scheduled for demolition. The idea of moving as a group to a new location came up, and, as a clear sign of the level of community dialogue that had been achieved, 170 households agreed to join in a community project to build their own houses. It was quite daunting for these families to consider moving to an abandoned grape orchard in Shiheung, more than an hour from Seoul by public transportation. In a spirit of hope, they named their planned village Bogum Jahri, which means "*place of good news*". In 1980 I interviewed some of those families. "It was difficult," many of them said, "There were fights every day." The people agreed, though, that what most gave them hope to continue building their houses and new community was the dedication of Fr. Daly and Je Jung Gu, and seeing them joining in brick-laying. (Je Jung Gu later wrote a book called *Laying Bricks with a Priest*). There was also a second Bogum Jahri community built nearby at Han-Dok. By today, though, the original residents of both of those communities have scattered, and the modest houses that people built with their own hands have been replaced by tall apartment blocks. The only remaining community is the third one, named Mok-Dong Village. The elected leader of Mok-Dong Village told me at the funeral that Fr. Daly was like a mother to their village.

(Hyo Woo Na in Seoul) Fr. John V. Daly, whom we call Jung Il-woo in Korea, was a guru of the poor in Korea. Born in Illinois, USA, the son of a farmer, Fr. Daly joined the Catholic Jesuit order at the age of 18. After graduating from St. Louis University with a degree in philosophy, he taught philosophy at Sogang University in Korea for three years from 1960. He finished his study in theology in USA and then came back to Korea in 1966. Although he had taught spiritual theology, the thought that he was preaching only with his lips haunted him a long while, and he eventually found his way to the shabby makeshift towns of squatters and evictees in Chongkye in Seoul in 1973, where he built solidarity with them. He was always on the side of the weak after that. Despite of continuous threats of deportation, his affection to Korea and friendship with colleagues here deepened as time passed.

(Kirtee Shah in India) Fr. John Daly's passing away brings the curtain down on an era. I saw him as a hero and the project at Bogum Jahri as his most heroic act. He came to participate in the seminars ASAG organized in five cities India the mid 1980s, on "Shelter for the Urban Poor: Local and International Experiences". Wherever John spoke in those seminars--Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Chennai - he was an instant hit. He spoke with clarity and passion, and his story had a powerful message: be one with those you are working with, live with them as they live, see them as change agents, trust them to solve their own problems. With his colored beard and shinning eyes, he looked like a film star. And he related with people with immense warmth. Three decades have passed since then. A few years ago, I went to see him in Seoul; he was not the same charismatic person, but the fire was still burning. I will not forget his passionate embrace. It was wonderful to have met you and known and admired Fr. John Dally. Though we lived far apart and did not connect much in later years there was still a great feeling that persisted.

(Arif Hasan in Karachi) Fr. John was one of the early fighters for the rights of the poor. As a young man, I was greatly inspired by him, especially when he visited Karachi and gave us ideas on how to deal with the eviction issues we were facing at that time. There should be a way by which we can honor those who, like Father John, have been our role models and have contributed to the evolution of thought and action for equity and justice in a hostile world.

PATRICK MAGEBHULA HUNSLEY (1958 - August 3, 2014)

And lastly we say goodbye to the extraordinary Patrick Magebhula, one of the national leaders in the South Africa Homeless People's Federation and a frequent visitor to Asia, where his vivid stories and clear messages made him as popular as a rock star on the Asian urban poor exchange circuit. We can't reproduce that marvelous voice or those skittery eyes and gestures of his, but we can reproduce a specimen of Patrick's way with words. Here is a specimen from the presentations Patrick made during the second Asian People's Dialogue in Jakarta, in September 2002:

My father had five wives and five houses. I am the eldest from the first family. So I am the head of my family. My father had about two hundred cows, and about 500 sheep and goats and about 120 chickens behind the house. But when I was five years old, he passed away, and all his brothers and sisters took all these cows and sheep and goats and chickens and divided them amongst themselves, and I ended up living in a squatter settlement called Inanda, near Durban. In 1989, when the Asian people were having their first People's Dialogue in Korea, in South Africa, we were all still doing *Oiye-Oiye!* We were all fighting for a new South Africa, demonstrating, fighting, shouting. At our first people's dialogue in South Africa in 1991, I met Somsook, Jockin, Gregor, Sheela, Mama Iris, Rose - I met a lot of people there. And you people here in Asia said to us in South Africa, "*Hey don't just scream and shout, why don't you save something? Save some money, you know? Come together, talk, build houses and negotiate for land. Do something!*" Some of our people from the shack settlements went to the Grameen Bank for exposure, some went to Mumbai for the Mahila Milan savings schemes, some came to Thailand to look at financial systems - and we saved.



Our problem is that we poor people like to sit and wait. And then after two or three years, someone gets evicted, and then we all stand up and fight. When that is finished, we go back and sleep for another five years. And then there is a flood, and we all get up again and fight - fight the water, fight the local government. And then we sleep for another five years. That's our problem. All the time we are sleeping, the government and big businesses are looking at us sleeping and listening to us snoring. "Oh, they're sleeping," and they say, "Hey you know what? Let's build a hospital here. Let's build a hotel and a shopping center there. Let's chase these sleepers away." We're sleeping, and the problem is we don't think when we're sleeping! What we are proposing to you is, can we meet every day, can we save every day? Can we meet continuously and do the thinking and get organized? When the government thinks we're still sleeping, can we go to the government and say, "*How about giving us this piece of land? How about we build this sewer together? How about we build this clinic together?*" Can we put programs on the government's table?

(From Joel Bolnick in Cape Town) Patrick Magebhula Hunsley, my comrade, my brother and my very special friend, has been dodging bullets all his life - literally and figuratively. He survived being stabbed in the lung. He survived vicious assaults. He survived stints in reformatory and in prison. He survived being forced into joining a zulu nationalist vigilante gang. He survived a prolonged fight in the shacklands of Inanda to bring a progressive civic organization into being in his settlement. He survived wave after wave of attacks from forces of reaction and crime to unseat him. He survived alcoholism. He survived TB. He survived HIV. He survived being a poor man in the shacklands of South Africa.

Today he breathed his last. The accumulated batterings of poverty wore him down. It is a miracle that he lived for 56 years. It is impossible to imagine a future without him - without his marvelous sense of humor, his poetic soul, his fiery oratory, his capacity to find common ground with one and all, his deep compassion for his fellow human beings. A flawed genius has passed on. My life will be immeasurably poorer as a result, and on a far grander scale so too will be a movement that shares his dream for a just and equitable world in which poverty and exclusion, oppression and intolerance are consigned to the past. For the next few weeks there will be mourning for Patrick in hundreds of informal settlements, backyard shacks, pavement dwellings in dozens of countries. There will be mourning for him in places of power where his sparkle and his candor, his determination and his unwavering commitment earned him enemies but won over many, many more.



ACHR to sign MoU to assist Cambodia's new Housing Department: In May 2010, the Cambodian government issued "Circular 3", a progressive housing policy that was based largely on the work of the UPDF, with inputs from ACHR. The policy focuses on community-driven, collaborative and citywide slum-upgrading, with on-site slum upgrading as the first housing redevelopment option, and relocation within the city to free government land only in cases where *in-situ* upgrading is not possible. Then, three years ago, ACHR was asked to prepare a concept note for the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction, with suggestions how to scale up and institutionalize the people-driven upgrading that was already happening under the "Circular 3" policy into a national housing program. After some time, the government now seems ready to set up the country's first housing department, and has asked for ACHR's continued collaboration and support. In January 2014, Somsook and

the team from the Community Development Fund (CDF) Foundation met with Mr. Im Chhun Lim, the Minister of Land Management, to discuss this. It was agreed that ACHR would continue to assist in the "Capacity building" of the Ministry and staff in several ways, including facilitating ministerial and staff exchanges to Thailand, organizing training workshops for government officers, supporting the Ministry to develop a 5-year housing plan and developing some pilot projects in collaboration with all four organizations. To seal the deal, an MOU will be signed between the Ministry, CDF Foundation, UN-Habitat and ACHR in late October. *For more information, contact ACHR or Nylen at CDF Foundation: info@cdfcambodia.net*

New fund for reviving historic communities in Thailand: In a country where just about everyone agrees that shiny and new is always better than battered and old, historic urban neighborhoods and civic places get short shrift: why restore them when you can just demolish and replace them with a beautiful new shopping mall? But there's good news for those who believe that much of Thailand's cultural and built past is worth saving. A new fund is being set up to support innovative community-managed projects to preserve historic urban neighborhoods and public spaces, old markets and market communities, canal-side settlements and other physical examples of "people's heritage." The fund will be launched with an initial capital of 25 million Baht (US\$800,000), which combines a 15 million Baht grant from the Crown Property Bureau with a matching grant of 10 million Baht from CODI, and will be managed jointly by several organizations, including the National Urban Community Network. The idea of the new fund is not just to restore these physical buildings and places, but to bring back to life the systems and relationships that went with these historic community places, and to use the projects to help the shiny-new-obsessed residents of Thailand's cities to reconnect with their social and historic roots. As part of this, the fund may support projects which blend physical restoration with heritage tourism, and open up little-known historic corners of the city to the larger public, at the same time they give an economic boost to the local people. The hope is to get the government agencies involved in this initiative, and the time may be ripe, because the new Minister of Culture is an architect. *For more information, please contact ACHR.*



ACHR - IIED Poverty line study report is now being printed. The idea of this study was first hatched in a workshop on poverty assessment organized by IIED in London, back in January 2013. One of the most bothersome issues in that workshop was the poverty line, and particularly the World Bank's dollar-a-day poverty line. Everyone agreed that different countries and different cities have different living costs and different poverty levels and that poverty lines ought to reflect those differences. They also agreed that poverty is complex and multi-faceted, and not simply a matter of how much a person earns each day. So why was that single, very-low poverty line still being used to measure poverty? And if the dollar-a-day doesn't make sense, what should the real poverty line - or lines - be? A suggestion came up that instead of letting ourselves get too frustrated with how the World Bank and international agencies define and measure poverty, why don't we make our own study of urban poverty? And instead of doing it in the conventional way, with Doctor This and Professor That going around the slums with their questionnaires, why not let the poor themselves define poverty and determine the real poverty lines in their countries? IIED agreed to support a study in which urban poor community organizations in several Asian countries would define poverty and develop their own poverty lines, according to the real conditions in their cities, and ACHR would facilitate the process. This ground-breaking

poverty study is perhaps the first to be conducted by the poor themselves, who are the real "experts," and whose understanding of poverty comes from actually living it and from their work finding lasting solutions to it. The study is now over, and besides generating some very clear definitions of poverty and some very detailed poverty lines for six countries, the study has opened up a new area of exploration for these urban poor organizations, to understand their own poverty with greater clarity, and to find new points of negotiation with their governments and local institutions for recognition and resources in their cities. *The final study report - a 28-page newsletter-style publication - can be downloaded from the ACHR website.*

IIED Working Paper on "Community Savings: A basic building block in the work of urban poor federations." While almost all of the community networks and federations within the SDI and ACHR networks have embraced community savings and credit as the core activity of their organizing and people's process building, all of them do it a little differently. The tools of savings and credit - like all good recipes - get passed on from people to people, community to community and country to country, where all sorts of variations develop, according to local realities, customs and ways of doing things. And the beauty is in the variations as much as it is in the common principles. There's no one single formula. This publication, which has just been published by IIED, is a compilation of stories about how savings is practiced by SDI-affiliated urban poor federations in six countries (Kenya, Namibia, Malawi, Uganda, Zimbabwe and the Philippines), as told by federation members themselves, with a little editorial assistance from Celine d'Cruz at SDI and Sheriden Bartlett at IIED. The stories are full of details about both the practice and the context of savings in these places, and they make for some wonderful and inspiring reading. *A copy of this IIED Working Paper can be downloaded from the IIED website: www.iied.org*

